

5.0 Coordination and Public Comment

As part of the environmental document preparation process, NEPA requires an early and open process for information gathering that involves both the public and interested parties. The objectives of the early and open information gathering process, or scoping process, are to (1) identify the affected public and agency concerns, (2) facilitate an efficient environmental document preparation process, (3) define issues and alternatives that will be examined in detail in the environmental document, and (4) ensure the environmental document adequately addresses all relevant issues.

Federal, State, and local agencies, as well as interested citizen and organizations, are asked during scoping to identify key environmental issues and alternatives to the Proposed Project that they believe should be addressed in the environmental document.

The scoping process involves informing agencies, interested citizens, and organizations of the Proposed Project; conducting interagency scoping meetings; and holding public scoping meetings. Comments received during scoping are used to identify issues and alternatives, make factual corrections, evaluate alternatives, modify and improve analysis, and contribute to decision making. FHWA solicited scoping comments and requested public input for the Proposed Project through advertisements in the *Redding Record Searchlight* on August 12 and 17, 2002, and in the *Trinity Journal* on August 14, 2002.

CEQA requires the lead agency to send a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR, soliciting participation in determining the appropriate scope of issues to be addressed in the EIR, to all responsible and trustee agencies, and involved federal agencies. TCDOT sent a NOP for Segment 3 to all affected federal, state, and local public agencies and the State Clearinghouse on February 20, 2002. TCDOT also sent an NOP for Segments 2, 4, and 5 on May 20, 2004. In addition, Trinity County participated in the public scoping meetings and open houses described below.

The CEQA documentation will remain separate from this NEPA document. Segment 1 will not be receiving any federal funds, and therefore it is not evaluated under NEPA. Trinity County certified the CEQA Negative Declaration for Segment 1 in September 2001. Also, Trinity County completed a *Final Environmental Impact Report* (FEIR) in compliance with CEQA for Segment 3 in 2003. This leaves a separate EIR for Segments 2, 4, and 5 which should be completed by Trinity County in 2006. The information in the NEPA and CEQA documents is the same, although the format and emphasis is different under each law.

A summary of the various public scoping methods used for the Proposed Project are discussed below.

5.1 Public and Agency Coordination Activities

5.1.1 Early Coordination Process

The Public Outreach objectives for the Proposed Project are to:

- Be accessible to the local community in order to effectively hear their concerns,
- Be responsive to inquiries about the project, and
- Communicate project updates clearly, frequently, and honestly.

Due to the remote nature of the Proposed Project, several methods were used to reach interested parties. Project representatives held several meetings throughout the development of the EA, including: attending four scoping meetings; participating in an information booth at the Trinity County Fair in 2002 and 2004; holding a mid-process public meeting; mailing newsletters to all P.O. Box holders in both Hayfork and Hyampom; providing a web page of information in newsletters and at public meetings; and distributing comment cards at local community centers in Hyampom and Hayfork. All meetings have been advertised in both the *Redding Record Searchlight* and in the *Trinity Journal*. In addition, the FHWA Environmental Specialist and the TCDOT Sr. Environmental Compliance Specialist distributed their names, phone numbers, email addresses, and postal addresses to facilitate people contacting them regarding the Proposed Project.

Over 225 comments have been received and recorded through June 2004. In response to these comments, the following changes have been made to the Proposed Project scope:

- Adjustment in the travel speed of the project design criteria
- Increased sensitivity to key scenic portions of Hyampom Road, to be reflected in the design
- Additional meetings held in Hyampom
- Creation of visual simulations of the before and after project implementation
- Increased focus in minimizing the effects to private property

5.1.1.1 Community Public Meetings

The following is a brief summary of public meetings and the input received during the development of the environmental document.

Trinity County Fair, Friday, August 23 through Sunday, August 25, 2002

The project team rented an indoor booth at the Trinity County Fair for all three days of the fair event. Two project team members staffed the booth at all times to describe Segments 2, 4, and 5 of the Proposed Project to the public, receive feedback about the Proposed Project, and explore people's perspectives regarding the current condition of Hyampom Road. Materials were available describing both the Trinity County Segment 3 project and the FHWA segments of the Proposed Project. Visitors to the booth were offered a comment card and a flyer that included Proposed Project issues and objectives, a map of the Proposed Project area, an overview of the environmental analysis process, and direction on providing further input to the process. Visitors were also given the opportunity to sign for placement on the Proposed Project mailing list.

The public submitted 54 comment cards at the Fair booth. Several visitors came by to discuss the Proposed Project without filling out a comment card.

Informal Resident Gathering in Hyampom on August 23, 2002.

Because residents of Hyampom are the most frequent users of Hyampom Road, the outreach effort has prioritized contacting these residents. The General Store owner in Hyampom suggested members of the project team attend an informal gathering that regularly met between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. on weekdays in the garden next to the General Store. On Friday, August 23, a project team member visited with these Hyampom representatives.

There were approximately 12 residents of Hyampom in the garden area. Three women and nine men expressed their feelings verbally, three of whom also gave their comments in writing with comment cards provided.

Open House/Public Meeting in Hayfork on August 26, 2002

A public meeting was held for Segments 2, 4, and 5 at the Dining Hall on the Trinity County Fair Grounds from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on August 26, 2002. The meeting was posted as an Open House meeting and set up to allow the public to view the displays and discuss the Proposed Project with project team members in an informal setting. Several members of the public requested that a presentation be provided.

A total of 29 individuals signed-in at the meeting. Only six comment cards were returned and one person wrote their comments on the note pads in the display area. The comment expressed concern for biological resources and water quality during construction.

Scoping Meeting in Hyampom on November 12, 2002

A second public scoping meeting was held for Segments 2, 4, and 5 at the Hyampom Community Center from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, November 12, 2002. A total of 40 individuals signed-in at the meeting. The meeting was set up to allow the public to look at the displays and discuss the Proposed Project with project team members in an informal setting. Verbal comments were recorded by project team members and comment cards were also received from the public attendees.

Public Meeting in Hyampom on May 6, 2003

A public meeting was held at the Hyampom Community Center from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on May 6, 2003. The meeting was held before the Trinity County Planning Commission, as a Public Hearing on the Draft CEQA EIR for the County's Segment 3 project. Immediately following the Public Hearing on the Segment 3 project, the FHWA Environmental Specialist made a presentation about the Segment 2, 4, and 5 Project, and answered questions from the public.

Open House/Public Meeting in Hyampom on October 29, 2003

A mid-process public meeting was convened by the FHWA staff on October 29, 2003 at the Hyampom Community Center, Hyampom, California from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The purpose of the meeting was to provide the public a mid-course update on the environmental review process. At this meeting, the project team received comments that pertained to Segments 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Trinity County Fair, Friday, August 27 through Sunday, August 29, 2004

For a second time, the project team rented an indoor booth at the Trinity County Fair for all three days of the fair event. Two project team members staffed the booth at all times to

describe Segments 2, 4, and 5 of the Proposed Project to the public, receive feedback about the Proposed Project, and explore people's perspectives regarding the current condition of Hyampom Road. Materials were available describing the potential environmental effects from the Proposed Project and visual simulations of Hyampom Road before and after construction. Visitors to the booth were offered a comment card and a flyer that included Proposed Project issues and objectives, a map of the Proposed Project area, an overview of the environmental analysis process, and direction on providing further input to the process. Visitors were also given the opportunity to sign up for placement on the Proposed Project mailing list. The public submitted approximately 20 comment cards at the Fair booth. Several residents provided verbal feedback without filling out a comment card.

Proposed Project Newsletters

To date, three newsletters have been circulated to the general public, agency representatives and other individuals expressing interest in the Proposed Project. The newsletters provide updated information and status about FHWA and TCDOT's progress on the Proposed Project, upcoming public meetings, overall process, milestones, and schedule.

Overview of Comments from Public and Agency Meetings

The primary agency comments centered on how the design might affect the habitat value of drainages, riparian and wetland areas. Public opinion falls into three general categories: 1.) those that support the Proposed Project, 2.) those that are not enthusiastically supportive of the Proposed Project but reluctantly agree the road needs to be improved, and 3.) those who are against the Proposed Project.

While few residents from outside of Hyampom dispute that the road needs to be improved, residents within Hyampom exhibit a variety of perspectives. Many residents understand that the Proposed Project is warranted but want to make sure that the character and beauty of the road and the isolated community is preserved. They agree with safety and maintenance issues that threaten the continued use of the roadway. This group is offering details about what they want the Proposed Project to avoid. They wish to maintain the windy, narrow roadway alignment. They are concerned about the disturbance and replacement of vegetation and the number and location of turnouts at key locations, such as Dinner Gulch. They want the improvements to be modest in nature. They are also concerned about the impact of temporary road closures during construction on their daily lives, commerce, and emergency services.

There are several residents of Hyampom that feel fixing the road may attract more people to their protected valley. They are concerned that by fixing the road, people will drive faster which will result in more accidents. Some Hyampom residents are concerned about how the construction period will be a long inconvenience with several road closures. Public comments are summarized in Table 26.

TABLE 26
 Summary of Public Comments on the Proposed Reconstruction of Hyampom Road
 (Fall 2002 – Fall 2003)

Themes Supporting Improvements to Hyampom Road	Themes Opposing Improvements to Hyampom Road
Public safety: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – School buses meeting a logging truck and dropping up to 1,000 feet is a problem which must be dealt with soon – Make it safe for elderly drivers 	Scenic Quality will change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Changing vegetation – Widening the road will reduce the charm and intimate nature of the road – Changing the scale of the roadway
Keeps property ownership accessible	Waste of millions of dollars
Long-term economic viability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tourism should be encouraged – Repair will help local businesses – Business deliveries will work around the construction schedule 	Concerned about construction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – It will be too inconvenient relative to the benefit – Construction will cause more slides – Proposed detour routes are inadequate – Road closure could interfere with emergency services – Road closures will interfere with business deliveries, Fedex and UPS may stop serving Hyampom – Tourists will be inconvenienced and may not return
Ensure reliability of the roadway: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – If it is not fixed then it could wash out completely – The road has been neglected – The road currently prevents return visitors 	Hyampom Road is not unsafe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fewer logging trucks, fewer travelers and that's the way we like it – People will drive faster on a wider, straighter road, causing more accidents – Statistics show very few accidents
Safe access for emergency response vehicles	Improved road will bring too many people to Hyampom
Reduce travel time on bus	Size the project for limited repairs only
Financially wise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Trinity County does not have the resources to fix major road failures 	Don't damage existing character of road

5.1.1.2 The Social, Environmental and Economic Team

The FHWA cooperates with other state, federal and local agencies when developing roadway improvements on Federal lands. In this case, Trinity County, USFS, and FHWA are the Tri-Agency team for this Proposed Project. These agencies then meet with the lead environmental resources agencies by setting up group meetings under the name the Social, Environmental and Economic Team (SEE Team). This meeting serves as a clearinghouse for issue identification and information dispersal. Coordination and identification of environmental resources specific to the Proposed Project are achieved during the SEE Team

meetings. A brief description of the two SEE Team meetings held to date is presented below.

May 21, 2002 SEE Team Meeting

On May 21, 2002, the Proposed Project proponents met with agency representatives to review the Proposed Project plans and concerns. The agency representatives who attended the meeting included Pat Flynn (FHWA), Stephanie Popiel (FHWA), Jan Smith (Trinity County), Anna Arnold (USFS), David Tracy (USFS), Diane Ashton (NOAA Fisheries), Ray Bosch (USFWS), Bob Williams (CDFG), and David Ammerman (USACE). The following points were identified as key Proposed Project objectives for Hyampom Road:

- **Avoid and Minimize Environmental Effects:** Particular attention was given to water quality, wetlands, aquatic wildlife, and terrestrial threatened and endangered species and habitat.
- **Communication/Team Action:** Meet Proposed Project schedule, provide clear public information/involvement and define design elements.
- **Meet Proposed Action Purpose for SEE Team Agency Need(s):** Meet Proposed Action purpose(s) for all Tri-Agency (FHWA, County, USFS) associated maintenance and safety objectives.
- **Smooth Environmental Process:** Identify legal requirements early in the process, and achieve early and thorough issue identification.

May 6, 2003 SEE Team Meeting

On May 6, 2003, the SEE Team met with other agency representatives to review the purpose and need for the Proposed Project and to review the Proposed Project alternatives. Agency representatives were invited to attend to address environmental issues early in the process and to comment on the purpose and need for the Proposed Action. Agency representatives attending included Pat Flynn (FHWA), Stephanie Popiel (FHWA), Jan Smith (Trinity County), Anna Arnold (USFS), Diane Ashton (NOAA Fisheries), Ryan Mathis (USFWS), and Bob Williams (CDFG). The meeting participants generally supported the purpose and need document.

December 14, 2004 SEE Team Meeting

On December 14, 2004, the SEE Team met with other agency representatives to review the Administrative Draft EA for the Proposed Project and to review the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Project. Agency representatives were invited to provide comments on the document and the environmental issues anticipated from the Proposed Project. Agency representatives attending included Pat Flynn (FHWA), Stephanie Popiel (FHWA), Jan Smith and Bill Taggart (Trinity County), Donna Harmon, Bill Branham and Mike Jellison (USFS). The SEE Team provided detailed comments at the meeting and in written form that have been responded to in this EA.

December 8, 2005 SEE Team Meeting

Following the December 14, 2004, SEE Team Meeting, the FHWA decided to incorporate Segment 3 (TCDOT segment) into the Administrative Draft EA. The SEE Team convened again on December 8, 2005 to review the second Administrative Draft EA and to provide comments. Agency representatives were invited to provide comments on the document and

the environmental issues anticipated from the Proposed Project. Agency representatives attending included Pat Flynn and Stephanie Popiel (FHWA), Jan Smith, Bill Taggert and Carl Bonomini (TCDOT), Michael Landrum, Mike Jellison, Jim Schaefer, Ron Armstrong, Cheryl Carrothers, Lori Jackson, Sherri Chilcott, James Gonzalez, Dennis Nunes (USFS), John Pedersen and Julie Owen (Caltrans), and Wendy Reiss (Trinity County Board of Supervisors). The SEE Team provided detailed comments at the meeting and in written form that have been responded to in this EA.

5.1.1.3 Interagency Coordination

To date, the project team has consulted with the USFWS, CDFG, NOAA, and the USACE. These agencies also attended SEE team meetings held on May 21, 2002 and May 6, 2003.

In November 2001, FHWA submitted a species list request to USFWS. In December 2001, USFWS responded with a list that included southern Oregon/Northern California coho salmon, California coastal chinook salmon, marbled murrelet, bald eagle, NSO, and yellow-billed cuckoo. In June 2003, CH2M HILL submitted a species list request to the Arcata office of the USFWS. In July 2003, USFWS responded with a list that included southern Oregon/Northern California coho salmon, California coastal chinook salmon, bald eagle, NSO, and yellow-billed cuckoo. Copies of the species lists are included in Appendix A.

TCDOT held an on-site agency scoping meeting for Segment 3 on February 6, 2002 allowing an opportunity for CDFG and the USFS to review the proposed roadway improvements in the field. Concerns and issues raised at that meeting included potential Proposed Project effects on the Trinity Bristlesnail, Coho salmon, willow flycatcher and NSO.

An on-site wetland delineation was performed for Segments 2, 4, and 5 between June 4 and June 12, 2003. On November 13, 2003, the project team met with the USACE to review the wetland delineation. The wetland delineation was verified by the USACE by letter dated July 14, 2004 (USACE file no. 26733N). For Segment 3, the USACE concurred with the limits of wetland delineation for Hayfork and James Creek in a letter dated December 10, 2002. The Segment 3 wetland delineation was revised and verified in the field by the USACE on October 21, 2005 (approved by USACE letter dated December 6, 2005).

On May 14, 2004, Stephanie Popiel (FHWA) completed discussions with NOAA Fisheries and USFWS confirming that the Action Area is not within the geographical distribution of the California coastal chinook salmon Evolutionarily Sensitive Unit (ESU) and will not be included in the Proposed Action's environmental analysis.

On June 10, 2004, the project team met with representatives from NOAA Fisheries, USFWS, and USACE in Arcata, California to discuss the BA Technical Memorandum and the wetland delineation performed for Hyampom Road.

On July 26, 2004, FHWA sent a letter to the USFWS (see Appendix A).

On August 27, 2004, the Project team conducted a site visit with Karen Hans of NOAA Fisheries.

On April 19, 2005 Jan Smith (Trinity County) conducted a site visit with Leslie Wolff of NOAA Fisheries.

On June 10, 2005, Stephanie Popiel (FHWA) met with Ray Bosch (USFWS) to discuss the status of review and conclusions of the BA prepared for Segments 2, 4, and 5.

The USFWS issued a Biological Opinion on the combined Segments 2, 3, 4, and 5 on October 17, 2005 and a Concurrence Letter was issued by the NOAA on November 16, 2005.

In response to the 2002 NOP, comment letters were received from RWQCB, Caltrans, CDFG, and the Hayfork Fire Department (see Appendix A). One letter was received from the Hyampom Community Services District in response to the 2004 NOP.

5.1.2 Required Consultation

The Proposed Action will require Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation with USFWS and NOAA Fisheries, Essential Fish Habitat Consultation with NOAA Fisheries under the MSFCMA. As discussed above, the FHWA has participated in ongoing consultations with NOAA Fisheries and the USFWS regarding endangered species and essential fish habitat that may be affected by the Proposed Action. A Biological Assessment is currently under review by the USFWS. USFWS and NOAA Fisheries are also consulting with FHWA. Trinity County has already completed consultation with NOAA fisheries. Trinity County consultation with USFWS has been combined with the FHWA consultation.

The Proposed Action will also require consultation with SHPO under Section 106 of the NHPA. To date, SHPO has concurred with the FHWA on the established Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the Proposed Project. SHPO has concurred with TCDOT that a historic property and the Nine Mile Bridge within Segment 3 are not eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places by letter dated March 25, 2002, concluding Trinity County's Section 106 consultation process. Consultation with SHPO on Segments 2, 4, and 5 is ongoing.

The FHWA has conducted consultation with Native American tribes within the Project Vicinity. Consultation includes a phone call to the Nor-Rel-Muk office and to Bob Burns, Tribal Co-Chair on October 29, 2004, and on February 17, 2004 and a letter from the Nor Rel Muk tribe to FHWA on February 23, 2004. FHWA transmitted the Archaeology/Cultural Resources Technical Memorandum to the same tribe on November 2, 2004. Consultation included requests to the Nor Rel Muk tribe regarding interest in observing or participating in a subsurface excavation of a prehistoric site along Segment 2 conducted in July 13, 2005.

TCDOT has also conducted consultation with the Nor-Rel-Muk tribe and is currently negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding since the Tribe has requested that its people be able to monitor Trinity County construction projects that have the potential to impact Native American archaeological sites.

5.1.3 Public Viewing Locations

This Environmental Assessment report (together with other project-related documents) are available at the following public viewing locations:

Trinity County Planning Department

190 Glen Rd.

Weaverville, CA 96093

Phone - (530) 623-1351

Fax - (530) 623-1353

Jeanne Bonomini, Senior Planner

Trinity County Department of Transportation

303 Trinity Lakes Blvd.

Weaverville, CA 96093

Phone - (530) 623-1365

Fax - (530) 623-5312

Jan Smith, Sr. Environmental Compliance Specialist

Trinity County Library, Weaverville Branch

211 North Main St.

Weaverville, CA 96093

Phone - (530) 623-1373

Fax - (530) 623-4427

Trinity County Library, Hayfork Branch

Hyampom Rd.

Hayfork, CA 96041

Phone - (530) 628-5427

Fax - (530) 628-5427

Shasta-Trinity National Forest, USFS

Hayfork Ranger Station

Highway 3

Hayfork, CA 96041

Hyampom Post Office 100 Garret Road

Hyampom, CA

Al Saxton, Post Master

Trinity County Board of Supervisors

101 Court St.

Weaverville, CA 96093

Phone - (530) 623-1217

Fax - (530) 623-8365

Kelly Frost, Deputy Clerk of the Board